

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for treatment of a heart comprising the steps of:
2 forming a penetration through a muscular wall of the heart into an interior
3 chamber thereof;
4 positioning a distal end of an elongated ablating device having an elongated
5 ablating surface through the penetration; and
6 contacting the elongated ablating surface of the ablating device with a first
7 selected portion of an interior surface of the muscular wall for transmural ablation
8 thereof.

1 2. The method of claim 1 further including the step of:
2 manipulating the device through said penetration to strategically contact the
3 elongated ablating surface with a second selected portion of the interior surface of the
4 muscular wall for transmural ablation thereof.

1 3. The method of claim 1 further including the steps of:
2 repeating the forming, positioning and contacting steps to form a
3 plurality of strategically positioned lesions.

1 4. The method of claim 3 wherein,
2 the lesions are formed to create a predetermined conduction pathway in the
3 muscular wall.

1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein,
2 the interior chamber is selected from a right atrium and a left atrium.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein,
2 the ablating surface is disposed at an angle of at most about 90 degrees relative
3 to the longitudinal axis of the shaft.

1 7. The method of claim 1 further including the step of:
2 forming a hemostatic seal between the device and the penetration to inhibit
3 blood loss through the penetration.

1 8. The method of claim 7 wherein:
2 the seal forming step is carried out by placing a purse-string suture in the
3 muscular wall of the heart around the penetration.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein,
2 the heart remains beating throughout the forming, positioning, and
3 contacting steps.

1 10. The method of claim 1 further including the step of:
2 arresting the patient's heart.

1 11. The method of claim 10 wherein,
2 the arresting step is performed by endovascularly occluding the ascending
3 aorta.

1 12. The method of claim 1 wherein,
2 the ablating device is a radiofrequency probe.

1 13. The method of claim 1 wherein,
2 the ablating device is a laser probe.

1 14. The method of claim 1 wherein,
2 the ablating device is a microwave probe.

1 15. The method of claim 1 wherein,
2 the ablating device is a fluid delivery probe.

1 16. A method for ablating medically refractory atrial fibrillation of the
2 heart comprising the steps of:
3 forming a penetration through a wall of the heart;
4 positioning a distal end of an ablating device having an elongated ablating
5 surface through the penetration;
6 forming a hemostatic seal between the ablating device and the penetration to
7 inhibit blood loss therethrough;

8 contacting the elongated ablating surface with at least one selected portion of
9 an interior surface of the heart for transmural ablation thereof to form at least one
10 elongated transmural lesion.

1 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of:
2 repeating the forming, positioning, and contacting steps to form a plurality of
3 lesions, the plurality of lesions cooperating to generally form a conduction pathway
4 between the sinoatrial node and the atrioventricular node.

1 18. The method of claim 16 wherein,
2 the interior chamber is selected from a right atrium and a left atrium.

1 19. The method of claim 16, wherein at least one hemostatic seal is formed
2 by tightening a purse-string suture in the heart wall around the respective penetration.

1 20. A system for transmurally ablating heart tissue in a body cavity
2 surrounded by a chest wall comprising:
3 a probe having an elongated shaft positionable through the chest wall and into
4 a penetration extending through a wall of the patient's heart, said shaft having a
5 substantially elongated ablating surface proximate a distal end thereof for
6 manipulative contact with at least one selected surface of the wall of the heart for
7 transmural ablation thereof; and
8 a sealing device fixable to the heart tissue around said penetration for forming
9 a hemostatic seal around the shaft and the transmural penetration to inhibit blood loss
10 therebetween.

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